Unit .20

Session .04

Jesus Calls His Disciples

Scripture

Luke 5:3-11,27-32

3 He got into one of the boats, which belonged to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from the land. Then he sat down and was teaching the crowds from the boat. **4** When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water and let down your nets for a catch." **5** "Master," Simon replied, "we've worked hard all night long and caught nothing. But if you say so, I'll let down the nets." **6** When they did this, they caught a great number of fish, and their nets began to tear. **7** So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them; they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. **8** When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus's knees and said, "Go away from me, because I'm a sinful man, Lord!" **9** For he and all those with him were amazed at the catch of fish they had taken, **10** and so were James and John, Zebedee's sons, who were Simon's partners. "Don't be afraid," Jesus told Simon. "From now on you will be catching people." **11** Then they brought the boats to land, left everything, and followed him. … **27** After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, "Follow me." **28** So, leaving everything behind, he got up and began to follow him. **29** Then Levi hosted a grand banquet for him at his house. Now there was a large crowd of tax collectors and others who were guests with them. **30** But the Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" **31** Jesus replied to them, "It is not those who are healthy who need a doctor, but those who are sick. **32** I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Intro Options

Main Point:
The call to follow Jesus is a call to invite others to do the same.

Option 1

Each of your students should imagine a particular group that they'd love to be invited to join. It could be a band, a professional sports team, a college or university, or even a group of friends who want them to join them for a vacation or extended camping trip. Ask students to share what "adventure" or group they'd like to join.

Next, ask students to imagine that whoever is inviting the students includes three "offers" as part of the invitation. For example, they might offer the chance to see multiple cities on a road trip, or they might offer the student four solos on the band's next studio album. What three offers would it take to get the students to join the group or adventure?

Give students some time to think of their offers, then have them share them. What patterns do you see; for instance, did most of the students ask for beneficial reward, or did most of their requests have immediate connections with their group or adventure (e.g., the offer to achieve their full potential if they join a baseball team)?

Today's lesson will show Jesus calling the disciples: His three "offers" were to trust His lead, to be fishers of people, and to call sinners to repentance. Ask the students if these three "offers" appeal to them.

Option 2

Break your students into groups anywhere in size from two to five people. Tell the students they are to imagine the church has received a grant of unbelievable proportions. They have virtually unlimited resources at their disposal; they can get virtually any kind of money, resources, or expertise. Each group should choose some endeavor they want to initiate with these grant resources. For example, they could choose to make a commercial flight to the moon; they could create a band; they could make a movie; they can do whatever their minds can imagine. Give them a few moments to decide what they would want to do; then ask them to share their ideas.

Next, you have to admit to them there's a bit of a catch. The grant requires that whatever endeavor each group does, they have to get at least ten strangers to commit to it with them; no strangers joining (or not enough joining) equals no resources. They are allowed to make three verbal offers to these strangers (e.g., offering them money, or the opportunity to see the world, or to go to space, etc.; the offers must somehow be connected with whatever endeavor each group has in mind), but nothing more.

Ask how most students sought to win people to their cause. Did they "buy" them over? Did they invite them to be part of something glorious? Did they appeal to some social need or pressure? In today's lesson, we'll see Jesus call His disciples to join Him in the greatest endeavor of all: bringing about the kingdom of God. He did so with three calls: trusting his leadership, fishing for people, and calling sinners to repent. Do these calls appeal to us today?

TEACHING PLAN

Read Luke 5:3-7.

Simon Peter and his partners weren't bad fishermen. They knew what they were doing. They knew where to put their nets and when to put them down in order to get the best catch of fish. Since Jesus was a carpenter by trade, they had significantly more experience catching fish than He did. So Jesus' instructions here were not only contrary to traditional fishing strategy, but also didn't make sense in light of the fishermen's experience. Yet, Simon Peter trusted Jesus and obeyed in an act of total faith. As it would turn out, Jesus did happen to know exactly when would be the best time to fish and Simon Peter and his partners had the catch of their lives.

Because God's wisdom can look so different from the worldly wisdom we are used to, sometimes trusting Him can seem illogical and impossible. But we must remember that we aren't putting blind trust in a religious system and hoping for the best. We aren't even putting blind trust in someone who has never been proven. We are trusting in a Savior who has done the miraculous. We trust a God with a perfect résumé, a God who keeps His promises, whose character can be trusted and who has proven Himself time and time again.

- **In what ways have you experienced God's wisdom being different than the conventional wisdom of the world?**

Read Luke 5:8-11.

Consider the raw emotion of Peter's response here. He recognized the total miracle he had just witnessed and it caused him to respond by recognizing Jesus as Lord and confessing his own sinfulness. He essentially told Jesus, "Go away from me. I'm sinful and insufficient. I don't have what it takes to keep up with you. I'm not worthy to follow you."

Peter's confession may have been right, but it missed the point. The call and opportunity to follow Jesus isn't dependent upon our own goodness and sufficiency, but upon the grace and sufficiency of Christ. The transformation of the disciples from fishermen to fishers of men happened not because of what they could do, but because Jesus made it happen. He did the work. His sufficiency is more than enough to cover our insufficiency.

The same is true for us today. The call to fish for people—to make disciples—is a greater task than we could ever be able to accomplish on our own. Like Peter, we should be brought to our knees to ask the question, "Who is worthy of such a task? We are sinners in need of forgiveness." Just like Jesus responded to Peter, He responds to us with encouragement to not let our own insufficiencies cause us to run in fear but to trust in Him and His perfect sufficiency.

- **What is an accomplishment in life you knew could not have been carried out in your own strength?**

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
The call to follow Jesus is a call to invite others to do the same.

Luke 5

3-7. God's wisdom is not the world's wisdom. In Luke 5, Jesus was working to create a category of trust that supersedes our intuition, logic, and effort. Compare this to what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 1:20-25:

20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the debater of this age? Hasn't God made the world's wisdom foolish? **21** For since, in God's wisdom, the world did not know God through wisdom, God was pleased to save those who believe through the foolishness of what is preached. **22** For the Jews ask for signs and the Greeks seek wisdom, **23** but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. **24** Yet to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God, **25** because God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

In this passage, Paul pointed out that the gospel was a stumbling block to the Jews because they were looking to keep God's favor by works of the law. They wanted a sign different than a crucified Messiah. Further, he noted that the gospel was foolishness to the Gentiles because they were looking for an answer that didn't require faith, only reason (or what they perceived as "wisdom"). The Jews trusted in their ability to do. The Gentiles trusted their own wisdom. And the gospel defies both. What seems to be conventional wisdom is not the wisdom of God. It doesn't mean that the call to trust Christ is a blind leap of senseless, foolish faith. But it means that we place our trust in God, not the wisdom of the world.

We have the benefit of all the accounts in Scripture to help us better understand and trust God, even when it doesn't make sense. Think of all those before us who have trusted God in similar situations:

- Noah, who trusted God enough to build a giant boat in preparation for a flood;
- Abraham, who trusted that God would give him a child even though he and his wife were very old;
- Joseph, who trusted that God had good plans for him, even though he was in prison.

The stories could go on and on, big and small, all the way until here in Luke's Gospel where we see Simon Peter trusting Jesus enough to let down his nets at the wrong time and on the wrong side of the boat.

99 Essential Doctrines (p. 80, DDG)

Evangelism

It is the duty and privilege of every Christian and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all thus rests upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle.

TEACHING PLAN

Read Luke 5:27-32.

In the call to make fishers of people in Matthew 4:19, we see Jesus do two things. First, He invited His disciples into a relationship, and second, He challenged them to be changed. He said, "Follow me," which was an invitation into deep relationship. Then, in the second half of the verse Jesus also challenged His disciples to be changed: "I will make you fish for people."

In Luke 5:27-32, we see Levi (also known as Matthew) leveraging his circle of influence in order to introduce his friends and coworkers to Christ. It is an incredibly practical example of doing ministry where life exists. Levi was a tax collector. He decided to follow Jesus. So, he threw a big party and invited his friends and other tax collectors to come so they could also meet Jesus. Levi utilized the relationships he already had in order that they too might be invited into a relationship with Jesus and challenged to be changed.

- **Often we have a tendency toward being invitational without challenging others or challenging others without inviting them into relationship. Which way do you lean and why?**

At the end of this passage, Jesus makes the purpose of His ministry clear: "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Never once did Jesus lose sight of this aim.

- **Do you believe most churches and student ministries focus on this same aim as Jesus? Why or why not?**

Hopefully churches and individual Christians make it a priority to focus on the things Jesus focused on. However, it probably wouldn't come as a surprise to know of Christians and churches who have turned their focus toward other Christians while giving less attention to reaching those who aren't by calling them to repentance.

Not only that, isn't it often the case that once a person comes to faith and has been a Christian for a few years, they no longer have any significant relationships with non-Christians. They might have casual friendships with classmates or teammates, but deep, meaningful friendships with non-Christians seem to be harder to come by. This reality creates obvious challenges for us when it comes to keeping the focus of our mission on the lost. Even though Jesus had His twelve with whom He spent the most time, He didn't lose sight of reaching the lost. He was intentional at each point.

- **What are some ways you can cultivate relationships with those who are not Christians?**

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
The call to follow Jesus is a call to invite others to do the same.

Luke 5

8. In the Old Testament, we see a similar scene between Yahweh, the God of Israel, and the prophet Isaiah. During his vision wherein the Lord sat in the temple seated on a throne and seraphim were extolling Him saying "holy, holy, holy" to one another, Isaiah expressed himself in words similar to Peter's: "Woe is me for I am ruined because I am a man of unclean lips" (Isa. 6:5). Interestingly enough, after symbolically atoning for his sin with a piece of hot coal in the vision, God assigned to Isaiah a particular mission (vv. 6-9). Similarly, Jesus affirmed Peter ("Don't be afraid") and then commissioned him with the mission of catching people instead of fish. Unlike the symbolic atonement depicted in Isaiah's vision, true atonement for Peter's sins (and ours) would be accomplished at the cross. Also in contrast to Isaiah's commissioning, Peter's commissioning would result in world evangelization rather than localized judgment (Isa. 6:10-11).

Activity

Your students will be doing either drawings or modified improv skits. Ask your students to get into groups of one to six people (tell them that only groups with one or two people can do drawings; larger groups should do skits). Give each group an index card and have them write down a situation for an improv skit. It can be as broad or specific as they like: "Band room" or "Your friends and you are waiting for a pizza that's late while you play Xbox at your house."

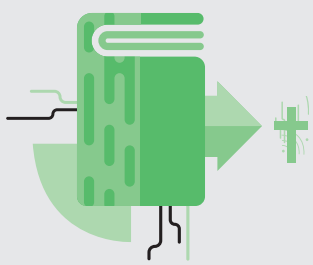
Once everyone has written down a situation, have them trade their index card with another random group. Whatever card they just got is now their setting. They have to produce a drawing or skit in that situation that shows someone acting like a disciple according to one of the calls we discussed in the lesson today. Which "call" the students draw or act out depends on the number of people in the group:

> 1 or 4 people: the call to trust Jesus' leadership; 2 or 5 people: the call to fish for people; 3 or 6 people: the call to invite sinners to repentance

Give them some time to prepare their drawings or skits and then to show them. While they are preparing them, you may want to go around to help them. Try to have them be as specific as possible. For example, trusting Jesus' leadership might mean not being impatient about the late pizza because you trust God's sovereignty over the timing of the delivery person. Discuss how you can live out Jesus' call to be His disciples this week. Pray to the Spirit to help you be good disciples in the three areas of the lesson.

(p. 81, DDG) Christ Connection

Jesus came into the world to call sinners to repentance and to lay down His life on their behalf. Likewise, as His followers, we are to tell others about Jesus and call on them to turn from their sin and trust in Jesus.



LESSON 47: LOYALTY
JESUS CALLS HIS DISCIPLES

Luke 5:3–11, 27–32

JESUS CALLS HIS DISCIPLES

The call to follow Jesus is a call to invite others to do the same.

JESUS CONNECTION

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LIFEWISE QUALITY

LOYALTY – Choosing to stay committed, devoted and faithful to someone.

HEAD

What was Simon Peter's reaction when he saw Jesus' miracle and realized that Jesus was the Messiah?

Jesus told the Pharisees that He did not come to heal the healthy, but the sick. Whom did Jesus come to call to repentance?

HEART

Loyalty is earned, not assumed. A person proves they deserve our commitment by their character or behavior. Jesus called very different men to be His disciples, but they all saw Him as the one worth following. And as they served together with Jesus, they learned to be loyal to each other by His example. How does knowing Jesus help you be loyal to Him and to others?

It's hard, even impossible, to be fully loyal to two things at the same time. Eventually, they will come into conflict, and we will have to choose. What specific things (thoughts, behaviors or people) are keeping you from being fully loyal to Jesus right now? What would it take for you to choose Jesus over those things? What would it cost?

HANDS

What are some challenges or opposition that you face within your family, circle of friends or environment if you follow Jesus completely?

Read the verses below and write how this might help you to remain loyal to God when others are not.

- Matthew 5:10–11 "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs. "You are blessed when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of me."

- Mark 8:34–3 "Calling the crowd along with His disciples, He said to them, "If anyone wants to follow after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of Me and the gospel will save it. For what does it benefit someone to gain the whole world and yet lose his life? What can anyone give in exchange for his life?"